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STATE FOR WHA A/S TOM SHANNON

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TFH01, HO

SUBJECT: TFH01: AMBASSADOR'S MEETING WITH PRESIDENT ZELAYA

Classified By: Ambassador Hugo Llorens, reasons 1.4 (b & d)

¶1. (C) The Ambassador spoke to President Manuel "Mel" Zelaya the evening of August 31. Zelaya said he was happy to be back in Washington and noted that this was the fifth time he had visited the U.S. since the June 28 coup. He said he looked forward to the opportunity to meet key players in the U.S. and mentioned that Charge Reina had developed a good schedule of meetings. Zelaya mentioned that he hoped to have an opportunity to meet with Secretary Clinton. He said he understood that there may be an opening on her schedule on Thursday. Zelaya stressed that the one primary item on his agenda with the Secretary, as well as in his scheduled September 1 meeting at the OAS, was discussion of the upcoming general elections in Honduras scheduled for November 29. Zelaya reiterated the view that if an agreement was not reached soon under the Arias mediation, he would advocate boycotting the Honduran election process and encourage his supporters to stay away from the polls. He said that he was seeking U.S. and international support against the elections as a way to pressure the regime and the Honduran political class to agree to restore democracy. The Ambassador said that we still had not confirmed the meeting with the Secretary but agreed to let the Department know of his interest in discussing the election issue.

¶2. (C) The Ambassador noted that the U.S. was working very hard with our democratic partners in support of the restoration of his government and the re-establishment of the democratic order in Honduras. The Ambassador cited our strong support for President Arias' mediation efforts and our suspension of military and development assistance. The Ambassador also cited our recent support both in Washington and in Tegucigalpa for the visit of the OAS Foreign Ministers to Tegucigalpa, as well as last week's decision to close the U.S. consulate's visa operations. He noted that this latter measure seemed to be having a strong impact in Honduras. Zelaya appreciated the USG's persistent opposition to the regime. He suggested that action to revoke the visas of key regime members would be an added and effective pressure point. He said he understood that Brazil was about to revoke the visas of 20 or so key members or supporters of the Micheletti regime. He added that he understood that the issue of visas would be discussed as well by the European Union this week. The Ambassador told him the U.S. was also

studying this possibility and that an announcement could conceivably come some time soon if the regime showed no inclination to reach an agreement. Zelaya also asked whether the U.S. planned to make a final determination on whether the events constituted a military coup. The Ambassador responded that our legal advisers in the Department were reviewing this issue and some type of determination or an announcement might also come out soon, but he did not specify what that decision would be.

LLORENS